

# Young athletes: passion for sport

---

Núria Puig Barata

Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya (INEFC)



The Centre d'Estudis Olímpics (CEO-UAB) publishes works aimed to facilitate their scientific discussion. The inclusion of this text in this series does not limit future publication by its author who reserves the integrity of his rights. This publication may not be reproduced, neither partially nor totally, without the author's permission.

This text corresponds with the lecture presented at the Second World Conference on Sport Sciences, Barcelona, October 1991.

Ref. WP031

To refer to this document you can use the following reference:

Puig Barata, Núria (1995): Young athletes: passion for sport [online article]. Barcelona: Centre d'Estudis Olímpics UAB.  
[Consulted: dd/mm/yy] <[http://olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/wp031\\_eng.pdf](http://olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/wp031_eng.pdf)>

[Date of publication: 1995]

## INTRODUCTION

The following text corresponds with the lecture that I presented as "invited lecture" at the Second World Conference on Sport Sciences held in Barcelona on October, 1991.

It has to me a very especial meaning, since it is one of the first steps of a line of research that I am directing at INEF-Catalonia, Barcelona, whose name is Emotions in Sport: social and cultural reasons. Its objective is the analysis of social and cultural components of the emotions expressed about sport. The area of the research is one of the most innovative in modern sports sociology and connects with the increasing interest on the sociologic analysis of daily life.

Since 1991 we have made great progresses either from the theoretic and from the methodic points of view. At this point I think it is important to mention what we have been doing during this period:

PUIG, N., (1990): "La composante passionnelle de la pratique sportive des jeunes". A ARNAUD, P. (1990) Le moderne en question. Innovation et changements sociaux, Lyon, Association Francophone pour la Recherche sur les Activités Physiques et Sportives (AFRAPS), Centre Jacques Cartier.

SANCHEZ MARTIN, R.; SNACHEZ MARTIN, J., (1992): Emotion and Sportive Spectacle: An Approach to the Social Construction of Emotion, Barcelona, INEF-Catalonia, Post-graduate research report. (Published in Spanish)

MARTIN, M., (1993): Top-level Sportswomen in Catalonia, Barcelona, Generalitat de Catalunya, Direcció General de l'esport, research report. (Published in Catalan)

MORELL, S., (1993): Sport Passions and Love Passions. A Proposal of an Object of Study. Communication presented at the World Congress of Sciences of the Physical Activity and Sport, Granada, Facultad de Ciencias de la Actividad Física y el Deporte, Universidad de Granada, November. (Published in Spanish)

MORELL, S.; PUIG, N. (1994): Passions in Top-level Sport, Communication presented at the XIII World Congress of Sociology, Bielefeld, R.F.A.

MORELL, S., (1994): The Emotional Itineraries of Top-level Athletes. Research report, Barcelona, Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya. (Published in Catalan)

MARTIN, M., (1994): Top-level Athletes in Catalonia. Communication presented at the III Congress of the AEISAD (Asociación Española de Investigación Social Aplicada al Deporte): The Challenges of Social Sciences Applied to Sport, Instituto Universitario del Deporte de Valladolid, Valladolid, October. (Published in Spanish)

MORELL, S., (1994): The Study of Emotion in Sport: A Proposal to the Sociologic Analysis. Communication presented at the III Congress of the AEISAD: The Challenges of Social Sciences Applied to Sport, Instituto Universitario del Deporte de Valladolid, Valladolid, October. (Published in Spanish)

KIRCHNER, E., (1994): The Emotions in Adventure Sports: An Analysis of the Contents of the Speech of the Practitioners through Computers. Communication presented at the III Congress of the AEISAD: The Challenges of Social Sciences Applied to Sport, Instituto Universitario del Deporte de Valladolid, Valladolid, October.

We will be glad to welcome anybody who might be interested in this area of research or anybody who requires information on what we do.

We thank finally CEOE and especially its Director Miquel de Moragas and the possibility of including this lecture in the Collection Working Paper, whose spreading role has been proved so far.

## PRESENTATION

In order to make a profound study of the factors that influence the participation in sport one must begin with the study of the opportunities and obstacles as a whole that have determined the personal itineraries and finish with the emotions that sport provokes on everybody. Finally, the decision of taking part in sport, of participating in minor or major intensity, of giving up a sports career at the top are explained according to the emotion that sport provokes on a person. Anybody who works within the sports area or anybody who practises sport has sometimes found him or herself in situations that cannot be understood without considering this emotional dimension brought up while practising sport. These situations sometimes help sportive efficiency but sometimes is right the opposite: without previous announcement the athlete is involved in an emotional feeling that stops him or her from attaining the performance. Patrice RAGNI, French trainer, affirms that "he often finds himself face to face with irrationality in front of certain antiperformances" (1989:61) of his athletes. Facing them, once physical, technical, tactic and medic preparation have been positively considered, he is obliged to accept that "what really works when it comes to obtain success is the athlete's own subjectivity and this subjectivity is very difficult to describe.

In effect, once this emotive ingredient has been accepted, it is necessary to make a deeper study of its nature (MAGUIRE, 1991). When we talk about the emotion kept back in sport, what do we really mean? Which kind of mental processes take place in the athlete's mind so as to provoke emotions to a higher level? Is it a different emotion depending on everybody or is it also characterized by cultural factors?

Very little has been published on this subject and it shows that this emotion is contradictory and strongly determined by inner impulses, difficult to be made objective. It is not a simple question of motivations (BROUSSE, 1989:15). The challenge with him or herself, obtaining the performance, the anxiety and distress that appear before the competition provoke the complex process inside the person which can cause emotion, pleasure. At the same time, all this has got important social and cultural determinants. (ELIAS AND DUNNING, 1986; MAGUIRE, 1991).

The objective of this conference is to provide several elements of reflection about the nature of the emotion in young athletes from a sociologic point of view. The empirical basis is the result of a research about "The sports itinerary of the young population in Barcelona city" carried out during the last four years at the Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya (in Barcelona).

We have used a teoric perspective based on phenomena. We wanted to find out precisely the experiences of boys and girls in practising sport and the account that they make of their own sports itinerary. For this reason, the investigation technique that we have used is the survey in depth.

28 surveys have been made on 14 boys and 14 girls divided into 2 groups. One constituted by top-level athletes (olympic selections or national selections) and the other constituted by people more or less in contact with sport but without any top-level orientation. Every survey has taken approximately 2 hours. The analysis of the contents has combined the quantitative and the qualitative approaches following the procedures of Pierre Pellegrino and his team at "Centre de Recherche en Architecture et Architecturologie" (CRAAL) of the University of Geneva (PELLEGRINO et al., 1986)

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMOTION IN SPORT: STATE OF THE MATTER

First, it is necessary to make a revision on the existing literature on emotions in sport. This has enabled to focus on the specific objective of the emotion in youthful sport. Then, some characteristics of the emotion in sports are mentioned.

Mario ABIS (1988) anticipates a even bigger expansion of sport due to its capacity to adapt to the cultural forms of the modern world and its socialization power. While the traditional ways of intercourse (neighbourhood, city festivals...) are everytime less present in social life, sport is introduced as an activity that favours encounter. In that sense, Jan TOLLENER (1986) mentions both scenarios that attract young people the most: the sports scenary and the pop music scenary. Both favour communication beyond the word and using the body, gestures.

In fact, the expressive capacity of contemporary sport has not been studied in depth yet. Vincenzo PADIGLIONE (1988) mentions the need of studying the specific sense of this phenomenon ("il senso specifico di questo grandioso fenomeno contemporaneo"). He finds in sport a ritual dimension that helps "the mixture of contradictory elements, sacred and profane, that convert the oppositions into identifications" (Ibid; 11). Also MAGUIRE (1991:32) thinks it is necessary to make a deeper study of the sacred and profane dimensions of sport. This ritual dimension carries a dramatic context that converts sport into a "linguistic metaphor", a way of communicating stronger than words, because it uses gestures, screams, movements...

On his part, Jean Paul CALLEDE (1987:105) considers sport an specific universe where physic exploit -either individual or collective- has got a sense particularly important. ROJEK (1985:181) mentions the skills required to obtain satisfaction at a leisure activity. The exploit -due to its power- is a source of identity, seduction and sociability.

The emotion in sport has also got mimetic characteristics. The mimetic activities are those in which emotions and excitement, which are not accepted in other spheres of social life, can be expressed. It deals with any leisure activity (music, theatre, sport...) that favours the awakening of pleasant excitement forms; forms, however, that are socially tolerated and regulated. "The mimetic excitement causes neither social nor personal danger and can have a cathartic effect" (ELIAS & DUNNING; 1986:80; SAEKI; 1990:7). Thus, the sociology of pleasure, closely linked with the sociology of leisure, shows that intercourse during a leisure activity is a socially tolerated behaviour (ROJEK, 1985:177). Any pleasant form must include discipline and control, otherwise is rejected, hidden (Ibid:177); it fails in fulfilling its mimetic function.

These activities cannot be untied from social life as a whole. They are related to the forms of control and self-control found in other areas. Its centrality is precisely due to the function that they exert within this context. They allow the expression of emotions without being a danger to the social order. A very interesting example is the one related to love. Love, socially accepted, is regulated through a certain example to follow (one person forever, the institution of marriage, heterosexual couples...). Any transgression to the established rule -though they are well known- are not accepted if they might represent an upsetting of the established order. Love passions, homosexual love... have not an easy social legitimation.

In contrast with these facts, that characterize "real life", love -and especially that of the less legitimate kind- plays a decisive role amongst leisure products (literature, cinema, theatre) (ELIAS & DUNNING, 1986:72). It is necessary to find a mimetic substitute for love, more than for any other human activity.

On the other hand, mimetic activities are exciting, pleasant, otherwise they would not accomplish the function that is attributed to them. Their "merit" is that they stimulate people's creativity, the power to re-define the conditions where they are developed, invented and re-invented (ROJEK, 1985:178).

According to ELIAS, the essential components of leisure activities are sociability, mobility and imagination (MAGUIRE: 1991,30). Without such "capacities" they would not have such a high degree of adhesion. Amongst them, sport has a privileged position.

Sport has kept the emotive capacity of the medieval traditional games after being subdued to a civilizing process of regulation and social legitimation. It has obtained a central position as mimetic activity in those societies where it has been developed.

However, the aspects mentioned so far are not enough to explain the totality of the emotions in sport and their effects on the people who practice it. They are pleasant, they provoke a "pleasurable excitement" but they are also "evident" and "positive". They are evident because they are the first results from a well guided empirical research. They are positive because they do not show any contradictory nor negative dimension. However, we know that pleasure in all its dimensions -physic, psychologic, sociologic... -is far more complicated. ELIAS & DUNNING (1986:82) observe that the emergency of tensions is an essential ingredient of any kind of leisure activities. When they talk about a football match they say that "if the tone of the game becomes too low, the value of tension as leisure declines" (Ibid:89). And they get even further when they affirm that any leisure activity must have a climax, a culminating moment, that provides all its magnificence. However, tension shall never surpass what is socially tolerated, otherwise a serious breakdown is provoked on<sup>1</sup>ce we change a mimetic event into a non-mimetic one; that is the serious problem that we face nowadays about hooliganism, which is spreading all over Europe (1).

Tension and climax are especially generated within sports practice associated to top level; winning, obtaining a record, being the best... are incentives that help its emergency. This is well appreciated on the statistic tables obtained from the surveys. Then, we can talk about the nature of the youthful emotions in sport.

## EMOTION IN SPORT AND TOP LEVEL SPORT IN YOUNG SPORT ITINERARIES

Sport associated to the top level, either as a real or imaginary practice, is always a positive experience. It does not happen the same with other practices in which perceptions are changeable; and, in particular, those referred

---

<sup>1</sup> (1) See, in that sense, the important contribution on this subject by ERIC DUNNING and his team at the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research at the University of Leicester, Great Britain.

to maintenance, which, when they undergo a statistic analysis, they have a negative statistic result according to the youngest ages.

Table 1 shows the statistic meaning of the various conceptions of sport depending on the ages in the group of the top level athletes. While age increases, sport as a maintenance activity loses importance and another conceptions related to top level increase. This "maintenance" has got a positive meaning between 10 and 12 years (+103.60) and a negative one between 19 and 25 (-100.37). But the "mental experience" and the "criticism" are positively significative between 19 and 25 years (+54.25 and +64.78 respectively); they coincide with the moment of greater devotion to top level sport. It is not rare, however, that the other indicator with statistic meaning is that of critical experience in sport. It is well known that the most critic athletes are those that require the most help to be able to attain certain objectives; that is, those that have chosen top level. Other previous studies also confirm this theory (GARCIA FERRANDO, 1979; GARCIA FERRANDO & ORTI, 1978).

Table 1: The conception of sport according to the age in the top level group.

Age	Exigence	Top Level	Competition	Maintenance	Relation	Corporal	Critical	Physical	Myth
0-9	+12.28	-22.62	-1.94	+46.01	+1.13	-5.05	-4.85	-0.01	+5.76
10-12	+17.77	-11.04	+1.22	+103.60	+0.34	-3.91	-5.84	-20.31	+3.54
13-14	+8.49	-1.06	+7.82	+26.68	+6.46	-0.36	-20.22	-30.27	+1.00
15-18	-1.48	+10.85	+10.48	-2.57	+10.51	-0.18	-21.01	-11.06	-2.70
19-25	-22.72	+4.04	-15.03	-100.37	-18.49	+9.36	+54.25	+64.78	-1.84
+25	-0.01	+2.55	+0.18	-6.11	-0.63	-1.99	+8.96	-0.14	-1.22

Other similar conclusions can be drawn from the group of young athletes during free time. Results are even more interesting since the experience is not related only to real behaviour but also to its function within people's imagination.

MAGUIRE (1991:29) insists on the symbolic dimension of sport practice. In that sense, the main result shown on table 2 is the positive statistic meaning of the indicators associated to top level.

Table 2: Conception of sport according to age within the group of non-professionals.

Age	Exigence	Top Level	Competition	Maintenance	Relation	Corporal	Critical	Physical	Myth
0-9	+0.00	-8.45	+1.20	+9.33	+0.22	-2.24	-4.71	-7.14	+43.4
10-12	+0.03	-0.01	+7.44	-0.34	-1.31	-1.56	-2.31	-0.74	+0.02
13-14	+0.00	-0.31	+0.43	-2.91	+0.14	-0.47	-0.07	+1.05	-2.34
15-18	+0.07	+20.41	-0.06	-1.37	-1.56	+4.41	-1.12	-0.09	-2.60
19-25	-0.01	-2.39	-9.38	+0.15	+1.31	+1.02	+19.96	+3.40	-6.44
+25	-1.47	-1.41	-2.65	-0.43	+1.83	-0.92	+0.75	+4.15	-0.92



Between 15 and 18 sport understood as top level is significant (+20.41). This is the moment during which competition can be experienced, aspect encouraged with concrete hopes with regard to victory, performances... Between 0 and 9 the mythical conception dominates (+43.43) which means top level from the point of view of children dreams. The dominance of critical discourse between 18 and 25 years (+19.96) has got a different meaning from the other group. According to the obtained qualitative witnesses it seems that alternative practises are also included. It is not so much a criticism to sport as to the institution. It is well known that the so called practises, in spite of being practised apart from the institution, they keep having -if not intensifying- its adventure, risky and expressive nature. They keep, in short, the emotive capacity of top level sport. The maintenance activities, on the other side, are only significant between 0 and 9 years old (+9.33).

Table 3 shows the importance of sport in relation to top level, the conception of sport in relation to the problems of abandonment. The most important result consists in perceiving how abandoning is associated to maintenance and not to other selected indicators. It is well known to which extent top level sport is a hard and demanding practice. Even more if we consider that it is practised at admitted unstable ages. It is not rare, then, that abandonments are found due to the excessive burden that can represent.

However, it is surprising to see that during the speeches of the interviewed people, abandonment related to top level (practised or imagined) it is not statistically significative, it does not worry anybody. That is, abandonment is clearly less related to the conception of top level than it is to maintenance; the level of importance of the abandonment due to various reasons is +15.96. Neither it has a positive meaning with the "experienced" conception where it is clearly expressed that abandonment does not exist (+5.97).

Table v.3. Abandonment according to the conception of sport

	<b>Maintenance</b>	<b>Top-level</b>	<b>Experience</b>
<i>personal abandonment</i>	(-) 3.78	(+) 0.20	(+) 0.55
<i>no abandonment</i>	(-) 8.11	(-) 1.08	(+) 5.97
<i>other reasons</i>	(+) 15.96	(+) 0.09	(-) 6.22

These data confirm that the nature of the emotions in sport is not simple, at least in relation to the young population. From the statistic analysis it can be seen that top-level contains the most attractive elements (winning, top performance, showing off...) even if its practice represents suffering.

In fact, the pleasure of the activity arrives after a great effort. The interest towards such dimension of sport is also shown through the little importance given to abandonment.

The psychoanalytic thought emphasizes the contradictory and paradoxal dimension of the emotion in sport. Marie Hélène BROUSSE (1989) starts from a discipline which consists in "demonstrating how, paradoxically, the subject of the unconscious (...) is not correlated with a satisfaction that would be natural (...). The relationship between the subject of the unconscious and the diverse forms that the goods of the world or the dominating

Good acquire historically or sociologically are neither automatic nor necessary" (BROUSSE, 1989: 15-16)

Some of the gathered witnesses during the interviews reveal this contradictory feeling (pleasure and suffering at the same time) related to sport:

- "When you get the bug, you get hooked and you can't give it up".
- "It's like when you fall in love, you get hooked".
- "You find yourself, you control yourself, you make it better".
- "Your hopes in sport are fulfilled, sport makes you feel alive."
- "You like it (sport) so much that you can't stop talking about it the whole day."

It seems appropriate then, to affirm that at least amongst an important part of the young population, emotions in sport have got a passionate nature.

From this perspective, many previous comments about emotions in sport become coherent. It is the necessary to explain what is understood for passion and to give some examples of passion in sport.

## PASSION

From an etymological point of view, the first antecedent of the word "passion" is to be found in the Greek verb **pascho**. It has got a double meaning: "to love somebody" (not only linked to a mere love feeling) and "to feel physic or moral pain". Some time afterwards, still in Greek, the verb **pathein** and the noun **pathé** are more orientated to the second meaning; that is, to a passive state, suffering, pain. The Latin verb **patior** is already defined in the Dictionary with many explanations related to suffering, pain and shame. Only in an anecdotal way another definition is given: "When somebody cannot help doing something". The latter,, which interests us in relation to the subject that is being discussed, will hardly be considered during the following centuries, very influenced by the Christian tradition. During this period, passion will only be "action of suffering" and "redemption of a punishment".

Together with Romanticism, the version "When someone cannot help doing something" linked to love appears again.

For love is understood -passion (concept defined by Stendhal) as the form of love that is somehow uncontrollable, tha takes lovers to a "swirl beyond any rational control" (MAY, 1984:93). From this moment on, literary examples about the use of this term become more numerous and mowadays they are a part of the current language.

It is important to note that this conception of the word passion does not exclude suffering. It is not only suffering, though. If it were so, it would not be possible to understand neither the feelings nor the actions that affect people in a state of passionate love. Passion is paradoxal and dialectic (TRIAS, 1988:7). Jeanette Winterson summarizes the dialectic aspect of this term and in a novel of hers called "Passion" she asks herself about "what is in a woman that can make a man become a saint through passion" (WINTERSON, 1987:38). Which is

then the power of passion?

Passion is also creation. The fragment of the novel by Winterson (1987:38) gives us a good example:

"But when she died, suddenly, a morning, the voice lost its light, mud filled his pipes and he could hardly harvest and feed his children. She had made him possible. In that sense, she was his God"

In his Tratado de la pasión, Eugenio TRIAS mentions the creative capacity of passion. It is true that it generates suffering due to the absence of a total answer to desire (insatiable, on the other hand). However, and at the same time, passion is an illimited force that obliges to know, to achieve, to form one's own will (TRIAS, 1988: 38-39). The wish to possess the other person becomes a motor that makes unusual abilities work. Passion is at the same time, a source of suffering and of energy, of creation, of self-power... People that live in a passionate love state surprize and are surprized not only for the crazy things that they are able to do, but also for the almost illimitate capacities that they seem to have.

Francesco ALBERONI makes a similar approach when he defines a loving state as " a revolutionary force, impulsive and creative" (1985). Ans as "the beginning of a collective mouvement of two people" (Ibid:9). It is a collective mouvement because "amongst the greatest collective mouvements of History and loving state there is a close relationship, the kind of forces that are set free and act are the same, many of the experiences of solidarity, happiness of living, of renewing are similar." (Ibid:10)

Passion is aslo an escape, dicovering a desired world. In his La genesse des passions dans la vie sociale, Jean Duvignaud (1990) analyses passions related to this escape of the daily routine: "such passions, do not try to free life from its imprisonment in codes and norms?" (DUVIGNAUD, 1990: 209), "the irresistible promise of a future that does not exist yet" (Ibid:209), "passion is a model of liberation of the being from the existence, towards another existence, that does not exist yet" (Ibid:211).

The problem is that love passions are illegitimate. They are most times not socially tolerated. they do not operate within the mimetic scene but in the real one: "affection is showed through feelings, through passion, that when they are expressed beyond established norms, they constitute a scandal" (Ibid:208).

Passion, however, can be present not only in the love scene, but also in other moments of social life, as for instance in sport. The passionate feeling (dialectic, contradictory, paradoxal...) is also present and, for this reason, it also provokes great agreements. THe main difference is that passion in sport -like some other passions in differnt leisure activities- has changed from real life to its mimetic dimension. It becomes a legitimate passion and it has then a great social acceptance. It is then necessary to note some of the characteristics of passion in sport.

## PASSION IN SPORT

The first characteristic of passion in sport is **pleasure** ("goce" in Spanish; "jouissance" in French). It would be

the **pleasant dimension** -whose main aspects have already been defined- Sebastià SERRANO in his novel Elogi de la passió pura (1991) offers some more examples:

"We will bend forward in an expectant attitude... how I enjoy following the ritual! Waiting for the starting shot. Like a runner so many times anticipated himself and everybody once again must recommence the ritual" (Ibid:21)

"A wonderful communication had been established between us (...). I was accelerated. I was reaching the top of the supreme effort and I was very lucky that both events, his anxious look around and my effort climax, came absolute simultaneously" (Ibid:36)

"I was absolutely hypnotized by his easy stride and by the economy of his movements" (Ibid:36)

Reaching pleasure is complex and it is reached following not always evident ways. Michel GRUN-REHOMME (1989) shows that pain is not always absent, situations of anxiety, the duality competition-training or rivalry between athletes. The author insists on the importance of such pleasure so as to understand dedication to sport, especially to level. In spite of the fact that nowadays, such dimension in sport is very conditioned by socio-economic imperatives, it is not exclusively explained through them. The reference to "la jouissance de l'acte, de la jouissance de l'objet "perf"..." (GRUN-REHOMME, 1989:33) is essential.

Pleasure is closely related to suffering, the other side of the passionate feeling: "top level sport is the logic point of the extremes. This is precisely the origin of the enjoyment of modern sport" (BROUSSE, 1991), "in top level sport there is something beyond the limits of the body, produced by the logic of the competition: it produces enjoyment to the athlete" (Ibid). We can see how enjoyment is not only produced in a "positive" sense but also in a certain "cannot help..." that produces it. Pleasure and suffering altogether, then.

Any sports event develops three dimensions of the person: the organism, the body and the subject (BROUSSE, 1989:15). It means a lot more than a notion discharge, because it contains all the subjectivity of a person who, in a greater extent, is uncontrollable and sometimes irrational. Any trainer often finds him or herself fighting against reactions of the sportspeople totally uncomprehensive that generate tension and suffering within the team (RAGNI, 1989). Marie Hélène BROUSSE (1991) gives us a paradigmatic example about a group of the French rowing team who forgot to go to the starting point during one of the olympic proofs in Seoul due to their extasi.

While they were training they had reached such a climax that they were separated from the world. Some other reports made by sportspeople about what they like the most are also surprising. Thierry Vigneron, while talking about the jumps done during his sports career, he distinguished between his highest jump and the one that gave him the most pleasure, which he called ideal jump, because it had made him coincide with the ideal image of his body (BROUSSE, 1989:17)

Or the report of Maria Lelut after winning 25,000 dollars for her victory at the Chicago Marathon: "time was very important... to win such a reward is interesting but it is like the wind" (REHOMME, 1989:33). In the first example, the performance is not what the person likes, or, at least, the performance socially known. Satisfaction comes from what is important for the subjectivity. In the second example, on the other side, the performance connects with the inner needs of the athlete and is a reason for pleasure.

To conclude, there is a escape beyond. the sports event also drives the person -in a mimetic way- towards this unattainable world during daily life. It satisfies the desire of eternity (PARRAYON, 1989), Thanks to the dreams projected on the sports event, either real or imaginary, passion in sport attains all its importance. Such a passion allows top level athletes to imagine it in a concrete way and it allows anyone who practises sport in a lower level to be transported to an ideal world where fantasy becomes reality (Ibid:22).

## CONCLUSIONS

The research about young athletes in Barcelona city is a contribution to the study of the emotions in sport. According to a great part of the young population, sports emotions can be associated to a passionate feeling. And, in that sense, the most interesting thing is that this phenomenon can be found either in professional or non-professional athletes. It is important to note how sport associated to top level generates, either in the behaviour or in the thought, feelings of a passionate kind. Due to a positive perception of sport on the part of the contemporary society such a passion becomes a widely supported recognition which allows this feeling to be developed without problems.

However, this report is only a little contribution to "an unexplored landscape" (MAGUIRE, 1991: 32). Emotions in sport should be studied in a deeper way,

1. to make interdisciplinary approaches, because this emotion should be analyzed from diverse perspectives (physic, psychologic, sociologic, semiotic...) (ELIAS & DUNNING, 1986; GREIMAS & FONTANILLE, 1991; MAGUIRE, 1991)
2. to extend the sectors of the population which are object of study. It is important to know which emotions do spectators, hooligans, homewives... feel towards sport. Without immediate applications, such researches help to understand the social facts, they give them a meaning (HEINEMANN, 1990; 1991)
3. to extend the field of study to understand the meaning of sports emotions in daily life. Emotions should be studied in sports and also in other situations.
4. and, to conclude, to improve the methodologic instruments which allow the study.

## BIBLIOGRAFIA

- ABIS (M), 1988.- *Terra di nessuno: le tendenze di fine di secolo*.- Comunicació presentada al Congrés "Lo sport dei cittadini, Taormina (Sicilia), octubre. Organitzat per la Unione Italiana dello Sport Popolare sota el patrocini de la Fédération Internationale du Sport pour Tous.
- ALBERONI (F), 1985.- *Enamoramiento y amor. Nacimiento y desarrollo de una impetuosa y creativa fuerza revolucionaria*.- Barcelona, Gedisa.
- BROUSSE (M. H.), 1990.- L'enjeu de l'activité sportive chez le sujet.- in *L'investissement du sportif de haut niveau dans la compétition et l'entraînement*, Actes du deuxième colloque Sport et Psychanalyse, Paris, Institut National du Sport et de l'Education Physique.
- CALLEDE (J.P.), 1987.- *L'esprit sportif. Essai sur le développement associatif de la culture sportive*.- Bordeaux, Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux.
- DUNNING (E.), 1979.- El dilema de los planteamientos teóricos en la sociología del deporte.- in LUSCHEN (Günther); WEIS (Kurt).- *Sociología del deporte*.- Valladolid, editorial Miñón, pp. 24-35.
- DUVIGNAUD (J.), 1990.- *La g n se des passions dans la vie sociale*.- Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.
- ELIAS (N.); DUNNING (E.), 1986.- *Quest for excitement: sport and leisure in the civilising process*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- GARCIA FERRANDO (M.), 1979.- Problemas sociales del trabajo deportivo.- in *Revista espa ola de investigaciones sociol gicas*.- (8), pp.33-88.
- GARCIA FERRANDO (M.); ORTI (A.), 1978.- *Informe sociol gico sobre la residencia Blume de Madrid. Un an lisis de los problemas de cambio del deporte espa ol de elite*.- Madrid, Consejo Superior de Deportes. No publicat.
- GRUN-REHOMME (M.), 1990.- Comp tition et entra nement: diff rences et analogies.- in *L'investissement du sportif de haut niveau dans la comp tition et l'entra nement*, Actes du deuxi me colloque Sport et Psychanalyse, Paris, Institut National du Sport et de l'Education Physique, pp.29-39.
- LAGARDERA (F.), 1991.- *Una interpretaci n de la cultura deportiva en torno a los  r genes del deporte contempor neo en Catalu a*.- Tesi doctoral no publicada, Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona, Departament de Teoria i Ci ncies de l'Educaci , Institut Nacional d'Educaci  F sica de Catalunya.

- MAGUIRE (J.), 1991.- Towards a sociological theory of sport and the emotions: a figural perspective.- in *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, (1), vol.26, pp.25-35.
- MAY (R.), 1984.- *Amor y voluntad. Las fuerzas humanas que dan sentido a nuestra vida*.- Barcelona, Gedisa.
- PADIGLIONE (V.), 1988.- *Antropologia dello sport e del tempo libero*.- Comunicació presentada al III Col.loqui de l'Institut Català d'Antropologia, Barcelona, 7-10 novembre.
- PARLEBAS (P.), 1988.- *Elementos de sociología del deporte*.- Málaga, Unisport.
- PARRAYON (J.P.), 1990.- Performance et désir d'éternité.- in *L'investissement du sportif de haut niveau dans la compétition et l'entraînement*, Actes du deuxième colloque Sport et Psychanalyse, Paris, Institut National du Sport et de l'Education Physique, pp.21-27.
- PELLEGRINO et al., 1986.- *Espace et développement. Développement spatial et identités régionales au Portugal: espaces en interaction, transformations régionales et structures locales*.- Ginebra, CRAAL-UNESCO, vol.I.
- PUIG (N), 1992.- *Joves i Esport. Influència dels processos de socialització en els itineraris esportius juvenils*. Tesis doctoral, Universitat de Barcelona.
- RAGNI (P.), 1990.- Un groupe de parole avec les entraîneurs.- in *L'investissement du sportif de haut niveau dans la compétition et l'entraînement*, Actes du deuxième colloque Sport et Psychanalyse, Paris, Institut National du Sport et de l'Education Physique, pp. 61-64.
- ROJEK (Ch.), 1985.- *Capitalism and leisure theory*.- London&New York, Tavistock Publications.
- SAEKI (T.), 1990.- *a study on the symbolic functions of competitive sports in modern society*.- Comunicació presentada al XII Congrés Mundial de Sociologia, Madrid, juliol.
- SERRANO (S.), 1991.- *Elogi de la passió pura*.- Barcelona, Planeta.
- TOLLENEER (J.), 1986.- The sport scene and the comparative scene. A comparative structural functional analysis.- in *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, (2-3), vol.21, pp.229-238.
- TRIAS (E.), 1988.- *Tratado de la pasión*.- Madrid, Mondadori.
- WINTERSON (J.), 1987.- *La pasión*.- Barcelona, Edhasa.